biennially using satellite imageries. The forest cover in the States of Kerala and Karnataka as per the first assessment of the period from 1981—1983 and as per the latest assessment of the period 1997—1999 is as under:—

State	Forest cover in 1981—83 (in sq. km.)	Forest Cover in 1997—99 (in Sq. Km.)	Change of forest cover (in sq. km.)
Kerala	10292	10323	+31
Karnataka	32268	32467	+199

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Various steps taken to increase/improve the forest/tree cover in the country are listed below:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Guidelines have been issued to all States to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.

(iii) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest land for non forestry purposes.

(iv) A network of protected areas has been established.

(v) Ministry of Environment and Forests has prepared a National Forestry Action Programme to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people- centered development through increased investments in conservation and development of forest resources.

Kyoto Protocol on Environment

3382. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether bending over backwards, Government have welcomed the US Policy on climate change, opposing the Kyoto Protocol, which has all along been opposed by India as a pioneer of the cause of the developing world;

(b) if so, the details of the Kyoto Protocol, the stand taken by the US thereupon, and Government's decision in regard thereto; and

(c) how the US stand, taken to its logical conclusion would affect the global environment and emission of Green House Gas level on the global ecology and atmosphere?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU); (a) to (c) India has not welcomed US opposition to Kyoto Protocol and would continue to work with the international community in furtherance of the Bonn Agreement and Marrakech Accord for early ratification and entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. There has been no change in India's policy on climate change, which is based on maintenance of present equilibrium of commitments and differentiation between developed and developing countries with no new commitments for the developing countries.

The Kyoto Protocol commits the developed countries to reduce emissions of Green House gases by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels during 2008—2012. It also provides for three mechanisms, *i.e.* Joint Implementation, Clean Development Mechanism and Emission Trading that enable the developed countries with quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments to acquire Green House gas reduction credits from outside their own boundaries at relatively lesser costs to facilitate compliance with the Green House limitation and reduction commitments. It further provides for a compliance mechanism to address cases of noncompliance with the provisions of Protocol. The United States of America has expressed its opposition to Kyoto Protocol on the grounds of economic burden it would impose on its economy, exemption of major developing countries like India and China from specific commitments and scientific uncertainty.

United States of America is the largest emitter of Green House gases in the world. In 1990, it alone accounted for over 36% of developed country emissions and its emissions have continued to grow. The Kyoto Protocol provides for emission reduction commitment of 7% for the United States with reference to 1990. The opposition of United States to Kyoto Protocol would adversely affect global efforts to reduce Green House gas emissions and combat climate change.

Eco-restoration of degraded forests

3383. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several proposals for eco-restoration of degraded forests through joint forests management have been received by Government from various States;